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**Raising the Railroad to Their Highest Efficiency.**  
The recommendations of the Interstate Commerce Commission that the railroads of the United States shall be put on a plane of the highest possible efficiency by the repeal of those statutes which prevent their operation with due regard to the public interest should be immediately enacted in legislation by the Congress. Already in the great war emergency through which the nation is passing the folly of the philosophy which has hampered the transportation system of the continent has been made apparent. The inadequacy of the railroads to meet the demands made on them is directly attributable to the hampering laws that prejudice and ignorance have put on the books in the past, and until those enactments are revised in the light of reason and experience, there can be no permanent improvement in the situation and little temporary mitigation of the conditions which now exist.

By following the counsel of the Interstate Commerce Commission the Congress would provide for the intelligent operation of all railroads in a manner to serve the needs of the nation. The country would aid in the collection of the capital needed immediately to bring them up to an efficient standard, under the conservative direction of the financial officers of the Treasury and Bureau created to manage this important enterprise; and public and private investment would be safeguarded by a proper control over securities of all classes.

The railroads must have capital; they must be brought at once to a state of physical fitness for the stupendous task they are called upon to perform. To provide this capital and to furnish the improvements needed to agency so competent as the United States Government can be improved; to expend it intelligently and economically, no machine comparable with the present operating managers of the railroads can be brought together.

Moreover, by the assumption as a measure of war necessity of the duty of assisting the railroads in financing their necessary improvements, the Congress would begin a course of practical instruction that would be of the greatest possible benefit not only to its individual members, but also to the nation they represent and the constituents from whom they come. They would learn in the school of experience the magnitude of the operations that are essential to the maintenance of adequate lines, terminals and rolling stock. They would be informed on the overwhelming burdens imposed on private capital, which recently have been insupportable because of unwise legislation and inflexible regulation. The railroads have been in a straitjacket, when the safety of the country and the preservation of its institutions required full liberty for development. Their eyes would be opened to the forefront that must be exercised to meet not only the needs of to-morrow, but the requirements of years hence, and the difficulties, not in sending trains from stations and yards, but of providing the tracks on which they are to run, the rolling stock of which they are made up and solving the ever recurrent complications in which are exposed the frailties of human nature and the failings of men.

The Interstate Commerce Commission points out the alternative to this course. It is seizure of the railroads by the President under his war powers, and direct operation thereof under his authority for the period of the conflict. Against this course the fact that the Government possesses no instrumental competency to the labor of directing the roads, and the fact, attested by experience in numerous enterprises requiring the creation of Government bureaus, that the establishment of such an instrumentality would involve months and possibly years of legislative and executive experimentation and dickerings, argue conclusively. The country has before it the illustration afforded by the effort of the Government to build ships, in which its intention to create a fleet has been obstructed by inevitable quarrels, disagreements and deadlocks. It is appalling to think of the

consequences which would ensue if the influence which have been operative in this matter should be permitted to intrude in the delicate mechanism of the already demoralized transportation system.

The war plans of the United States demand that the railroads shall be brought in the shortest possible period of time to the highest possible state of efficiency. That can be accomplished by ridding the country of the barriers that unwise legislation has erected to oppose their natural and logical development, by replenishing their treasuries for the prosecution, under appropriate public control, of the new construction that must be undertaken, and by assuring the private investors whose money has built them that their interests will not be sacrificed. This course will preserve all that is good—and that which is good is invaluable—in their organizations, and give to the United States the benefit of the wonderful machines that, despite public opposition, have been preserved in the railroad systems of the country.

**The War on Impudently Rampant Selfishness.**  
"The law of supply and demand," said the President in his war address, "has been replaced by the law of unrestrained selfishness."

Profiteering, the Chief Magistrate went on, has been "eliminated in several branches of industry [many people would have been interested in the list if the President had given it], but it still runs impudently rampant in others."

In the case of the farmers, for example, profiteering is impudently rampant in their case, as the President points out; not, however, with the farmers as the profiteers; in his view they are the victims of the impudently rampant profiteering.

This is the special report which Mr. Wilson makes to the Congress and the country concerning the deplorable state of things affecting our agricultural producers, the unjust conditions oppressing our farmers, compressing them, as it were, between the two jaws of a vise operated by a relentless hand at the throttle.

"The farmers, for example, complain with a great deal of justice that while the regulation of food prices restricts their income, no restraints are placed upon the prices of most of the things they must themselves purchase."

Why did the President content himself with mentioning the farmers as sufferers from this sort of thievery? How about the railroads, for another example?

Has he not observed in the case of the railroads, with their incomes restricted by the regulation of rates and with no restraints on the prices of labor and other things they must themselves purchase, an injustice strikingly similar to that which excites his commiseration when he contemplates the farmer's lot?

Not precisely. The sections under the title allow deductions based on earnings in the years 1911, 1912 and 1913. The tax is therefore not designed to reach income which has expanded in consequence of the war, but all income which has expanded its earning power; i. e., shows a higher rate of return on the investment, within specified limits, since January 1, 1914. The meaning of "war" in the title "War Excess Profits Tax" is evidently the same as in Title I, "warlike" or "to defray war expenses."

The adjective "excess" in the title has been disclosed as referring to the excess of income, or net income, over that prior to January 1, 1914. Revising the wording of Title II, in the interests of truth, we find it should read: "Warlike Income Tax Based on Earning Power in Excess of That of the Years 1911, 1912 and 1913."

Even this would be but imperfectly descriptive, since there is no capital invested, or merely nominal capital invested, a flat tax of 8 per cent. is imposed on all net income above specific deductions; these deductions having nothing to do with income or earnings in the years before the war.

Does all this seem hardly worth while? It will have been thoroughly worth while if it leads some of us to abandon the persistent notion that the "war excess profits tax" is a tax on excess profits due to the war, or on excess profits of any kind or on profits of any kind. It is a tax on incomes in the rate of return on an investment. Congress ought to revise the title which misbrands it, and which would be forbidden if there were a pure tax law as there is a pure food law. A tax cannot successfully be camouflaged, however. And there is an exhibition of moral virtue possible in so simple an act as calling a spade a spade.

**The Hyman Administration Begins.**  
Mayor HYMAN's administration of the corporate affairs of New York may truthfully be said to have begun with a reduction of \$1,857,000 in the budget for 1918. The compilation of appropriations for next year, prepared by the Fusion Board of Estimate, has been reduced in that sum by a Board of Aldermen politically in sympathy with the supporters of Judge HYMAN, and Mayor MITCHELL has wisely refrained from attempting to force on his successor allowances for municipal expenses that he has been officially informed are unnecessary and not wanted.

The amount of the savings thus effected has been sneered at as small. Actually it is large; the fact that we have become accustomed to governmental expenditures running into the billions does not make a matter of \$2,000,000 inconsiderable. That it represents a small percentage of the budget total is of no consequence. Every assault on extravagance in spending the public's money is attacked as chicanery, because each item of waste appears small in comparison with the whole cost of government. The budget is made up of a vast number of appropriations, many of them small in amount and trifling in proportion to its enormous size, and it is only by careful regulation of these that the burden on the taxpayer can be reduced.

Mr. MITCHELL would have been ill advised had he precipitated an unnecessary dispute by trying to impose the judgment of the Fusion Board of Estimate on the Democratic Aldermen with regard to the amount of money a Democratic city administration should spend. He has adopted the wiser course, and the taxpayers of this town will hope that the economy shown in the preface by the Hyman administration will be justified by its record in office.

**Helping a Kinsman of Ours.**  
There is no paradox in saying that the most important thing accomplished in the purchase of thrift stamps is negative.

It's not the quarters we lend Uncle SAM that help him so much as those we don't spend for ourselves. Of course the old gentleman has to have money to buy goods and hire things done, but how in the world can he buy goods and hire things done if we compete with him? And that's just what we do when we buy things we can get along without. There are not enough goods and services in the country to supply our ordinary demands and his emergency demands.

Every time we buy thrift stamps we say to our well beloved avuncular kinsman:

"See here, you need what this will buy more than we do. Take it; we can get along without it!"

And the good natured fellow, up to his neck in work but not the least flustered, comes back at us with:

"I'll pay you 4 per cent. compound interest on every \$412 you lend me this way. Is that all right?"

Is it!

**"German Stamped."**  
Here is a bond, a Government bond of one of our allies, which is a particularly promising investment. It matures in a few years. If bought now and held for maturity it yields considerably over 8 per cent.

Identically the same bond except for a single circumstance sells about ten points higher. Purchased at the market and held for maturity this second bond yields decidedly less.

The single circumstance that differentiates the two bonds is that the first bears a German stamp. This makes it possible to buy and sell it on the German exchanges.

The stamp has nothing to do with the security of the bond or the actual value of it. It merely affects the price, because so many persons do not want a bond bearing a German stamp. Therefore they will pay only \$75 for this German stamp bond where they will pay \$85 or more for the same bond with no German stamp.

Curious, isn't it? Rather nonsensical, too, when the country that issues the bond is allied with us in the war against Germany; when the payment of interest and repayment of principal are as certain in the case of one bond as in the case of the other.

Yet the hard fact of the difference in prices is mighty significant of the feeling about nearly all things German to-day. And it points like a finger post to the fate of many things German in the years after this war.

Putting aside all questions of economic and commercial discrimination following the return of peace, there will be for Germany a severe and long enduring punishment in the social ostracism she is likely to be subjected to—and social ostracism always means pecuniary loss.

There are no surprises in a six day race of a Wilson Congress.

Thank heaven for that runaway balloon! No one suspected we had so many that one could stray away.

A trim nurse's costume is calculated to soothe tattered pocket money at any war charity function, and it does.

The Mexican bandit may be susceptible to foreign propaganda, as alleged, but he has progressed beyond the infantile stage of making speeches. It is something of an accomplishment to be disloyal without talking about it.

Every now and then there comes a substitute for gasoline, amply filling the place of the old discoveries of perpetual motion.

Some are "left to strut their uneasy hour and be forgotten," others march to an eternity of fame.

It may be held by some humanitarians that the death penalty, which is advocated by Judge MAZON, for charity swindlers is too severe, but nobody would object if each of them were kicked a couple of times by a Missouri mule.

Washington at least leaves the door mat for the Bolshevik to stand on while it considers opening the door.

President Wilson's reasons for asking for a declaration of war against Austria-Hungary are reported "not to be quite clear" to some persons in Washington. They are clear to every body outside the capital. What curious and unique atmospheric condition was it that made the President obscure them to any dweller by that interesting stream?

M. POTVIN, the Premier of the new Siberian republic, should have a kitchen cabinet.

Representative KIRCHEN, the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, says he expects a vote on national prohibition and equal suffrage before Christmas. How can all the oratory these subjects inspire for consumption "back home" be disposed of in so short a time?

Vienna bread may pass, but piñat remains.

**FACING THE PROBLEM.**  
Let the Government Issue an Occupation List With Its Other Lists.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: That there was an agitation when war first began between the Allies and the Central Powers, for the picture industry that the United States should hasten to supply the country with ships so as to seize the opportunity to get into contact with South American trade and enable American manufacturers to get a larger share of their business was all recollect; but that the necessary speeding up process is on and that it is vital to have more and more ships for the transportation of troops and the exportation of necessities, it is a pity that we were not more forehanded. However, the point which I wish to bring to the attention of the public is that owing to the lack of steamship space and to the so-called conservation list and to the difficulty of obtaining licenses for certain commodities, and particularly those called non-essentials, there are many concerns who have about come to the end of their resources through the inability to transport business.

Or what avail is the buying of Liberty bonds if they have to be converted into cash again through inability to carry on what trade one may have had? Does the Government, for instance, issue a schedule or list of what is urgently required, and is there any opportunity to be of service to the Government direct in this connection without necessarily being in the class of those who have made great fortunes as indicated by reference to the income tax on the first page of last Sunday's SUN?

The answer may be in that if the business you are in does not pay get into another or join the army regardless as to whether you are of age or not and other conditions, or else to take a position with some concern more efficient and useful; all of which we know the first time without being advised by the Redfishes or others.

They order these things better in France, methinks. R. R. THOMPSON, New York, December 5.

**TRADE BRIEFS.**  
Copal producers in Congo wish to develop a market for the gum and it is suggested by Vice-Consul H. A. McBride, London, England, that a demand for the new product might be created in the United States. Copal is a very pretty resin of various shades. The Director of Economic Affairs, Bona, Congo, will send full information about this product to any American firms interested.

Japanese manufacturers wish to purchase equipment for the manufacture of glass. Drawings, specifications and all other information relative to installations of this kind should be submitted.

There is a market in Italy for black and white seal fasteners of various sizes. Samples of the styles wanted may be examined at the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, 724 Custom House, New York.

American automobile manufacturers and makers of automobile accessories are asked to send catalogues and price lists to a concern in the Federated Malay States.

**REPRISALS.**  
The Case for Not Answering Frightfulness With Frightfulness.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: There has been some talk lately that the only way to stop German Schrecklichkeit and outrages is through reprisals.

Is it going to be a good policy to kill innocent women and children because the enemy does it? Because our civilians suffer have we any right to injure harmless Germans? I think not! Surely there must be another way of defeating Germany than that of harming and terrifying her innocent people.

Put the matter that would place in raiding airplanes on the firing line! Put the powder that would be used for the making of incendiary bombs into shot and shell that will find its mark in the trenches and not in a sleeping city. Perhaps these things would be all right if since war is so horrible in all its manifestations a little horror more will do no harm; that war is so utterly demoralizing that this taking of civilian lives is "all in the game." True, war is demoralizing, but it is not the brutal force in man, but there is a limit to everything, even demoralization, and to me that is the limit!

Supposedly we are fighting to make the "world safe for democracy." Is the way to go about it to use the same devilish schemes invented by Germany, "Kultur" and authorized by that very Prussian militarism that we are in the act of suppressing? Do you think that our noble ideal will seem very noble to the enemy when we try to gain it through the very means we are fighting against?

Will these reprisals make our ideal a true one and keep the Germans from thinking we are fighting for purely economic reasons? Will they?

I admit that in two centuries gone by poured hot oil down his prisoner's back. The modern civilized German pours hot shot and shell, so to speak, down a civilian's back!

Are we justified in gaining our end by the same means? Some say "no," but I treat the German prisoners badly Germany will immediately cease molesting ours. Again I differ. A people whose instincts have been so turned back to those of the "man and the stone age" man can hardly care what kind of their prisoners are maltreated. A people who have committed the atrocities they have cannot be moved by anything in the shape of cruelty in this world of ours.

A victory brought about in this way will be a victory of the spirit, not of the soul. Will this material victory over the Germans be when they know they have defeated us in soul?

ELSA OPPENHEIMER, New York, December 5.

**WHOLLY SAVE THE MOVIES?**  
Film Director Laments Their Lack of Progress.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: I was much interested in Mr. Brenon's letter on the subject of "Why Plays Fail," and especially that portion of it comparing the standard of productions in a picture theatre of New York with those of the motion picture.

While I am as deeply interested in the future of motion pictures as is Mr. Brenon, both from an artistic and commercial standpoint, and freely admit that the scope of the cinema is infinitely broader than that of the spoken drama (the limbo of the spoken drama is confined to the four brick walls of a theatre), I feel that if a comparison such as the one suggested by Mr. Brenon were made the picture would be the loser. The general standard of the spoken drama in America to-day may not be perfect; but it is not so far from the standard of the motion picture. Granted that the cinema has grown commercially and technically, few people can deny that from an artistic standpoint it has suffered a sharp decline during the past three or four years. And unless something is done to restore the standard of the motion picture, it is not long before it will be a thing of the past.

Suppose two men be sent to each play, the critic and a reporter. Suppose that a piece of straight reporting be all that is published next morning—a news story, telling, as the reporter might about a formal dinner, what the entertainment was, who gave it, who took part in it, and something of the plot perhaps, how many people were there, how they seemed to like it, and so on.

Then suppose the critic be given a Sunday page or two, wherein to say his critical say of each of the plays of the week, appended to the news story.

It would save him practically all the obligation of quick reporting, which eats up his space and his limited time as things are managed now. It would give him some chance to reflect, to clarify his ideas and condense his expression of them. True, there are plays born on Monday which are dead within a week; so much the better; the critic might save his powder. And so many others are seen at a disadvantage the first night that I am not sure the critic ought not to postpone his attentions a night or two, letting the play rest on its own merits, or perhaps with Mrs. Reporter at its side.

The report would give the reader all he needs or has time to learn as he gulps his coffee the morning after an opening. On Sunday the reader has leisure for the critic, whose report he takes with him to the theatre. The critic would be missed in a rush for the subway or the B-14.

H. F. D., New York, December 5.

**LABOR AND RAILROADS.**  
A Contrast of Government Methods in Dealing With Both.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: It is interesting to note the alacrity with which official Washington bestir itself to cater to the demands of labor. The anthracite miners who are at present working under an agreement which has not yet expired, and who, by the way, have such an agreement as nothing but a scrap of paper whenever it suits their purpose, have just a few weeks ago asked for an increase in wages. It took Mr. Garfield just two weeks to decide upon an advance in the price of anthracite coal for the time being, and accommodating those of his gentlemen.

In contrast to the above the Interstate Commerce Commission has been wrestling with this railway rate problem for over three years and does not seem to be any nearer a solution to-day than when it started. It is not about time that the investors organize a vigilance committee and proceed to Washington with a big stick for the purpose of threatening a clearing out of the halls of Congress, including the commission itself? This is what labor does, and it apparently brings results.

Since it is evidently impossible for the investors in railway securities to get a square deal in any other way they probably could do no better than to emulate action taken by the labor unions. It is both a disgraceful and alarming condition when a man who has his money invested in railway securities must tremble in his shoes at the thought of sitting idly by and seeing that investment depreciated almost wilfully at the hands of the agents of the Government.

Unless the Government wakes up to the situation and encourages rather than discourages investments in railway enterprises the investor is liable to close his purse to all such investments, including those of the Government itself, and then the answer will be something different to contemplate.

WALTER JONES, Reading, Pa., December 5.

**A Hint.**  
Since but a few days ago, your faces, benevolent, conspicuous, Were beaming from all public places To coax our humble votes from us.

His many virtues each proclaiming, No saving grace of modesty— And his antagonist defaming Regardless of veracity.

To-day those portraits, torn and tattered, These bearded words in glaring print, Dirty, undignified, bespattered, Confront you. Can you take a hint?

MAURITIA M. ANDREWS, New York, December 5.

**THE CRITIC NO CYNIC.**  
Some of the Things Believers of Plays Have to Contend With.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: If the public knew a little more about the dramatic critics of the daily papers, their work and working conditions, I believe the public would be less prone to view them with average contempt. I happen to know, because I have been in the critic's (although outside New York); and I am free of the illusion that the critic's own, for instance—is a supercilious cynic with a sincere, whose life is one long paradise of free seats and first nights, and who sits at a chess board, or because he is corrupt.

That exceptions are caused and other exceptions corrupt is true, and just as true of any other profession. But the worst one who ever sold out, or dangled a broad black ribbon from his eye, was a critic on a treadmill and merited sympathy as such; while as for good ones, if ever organizer deserved the "Don't shoot" placard, so do they.

But the letter which draws this of mine is the one from L. B. Wood, who attacked the critic on the same ground that he is not a guardian of the public's morals as exemplified in L. B. Wood, and complained that critics' encomiums had misled Mr. (or may it be Miss?) Wood into taking "young relatives" to see no less than five plays, after each of which he or she would say: "I enjoyed it."

When I say the public is savage as to critics I do not mean L. B. Wood, whose letter was quite moderate in tone. It was interesting because typical of a large class whose viewpoint so exasperates many studios theatregoers that they could not learn to ignore it. I think they have just claims on the newspaper critic as a reporter. They need not expect him to join them in forming on all plays tangent to their own ground; but they should not expect him to be a large class whose viewpoint so exasperates many studios theatregoers that they could not learn to ignore it.

Now I am not exasperated, nor do I think the Woods should be ignored. I think they have just claims on the newspaper critic as a reporter. They need not expect him to join them in forming on all plays tangent to their own ground; but they should not expect him to be a large class whose viewpoint so exasperates many studios theatregoers that they could not learn to ignore it.

I admit that in L. B. Wood's own case this might be hard to do. How in the world did L. B. read reviews of "Her Husband's Widow," "Madame Sand," and, without being warned to take those young relatives elsewhere? One would suppose the titles would be warnings. Surely a crumb of knowledge of George Sand can be taken for granted in a reader of your editorial page!

I think of a scheme under which I believe the theatre would be even better "covered" than it is and we should all of us—plain blunt man, the Broadway Jones, the L. B. Wood, the stage, the author, the critic, the newspaper, the Drayman League and myself—be better served than we are. Will you, without feeling that I am trying to tell you how to run your business, allow me to sketch this scheme?

Suppose two men be sent to each play, the critic and a reporter. Suppose that a piece of straight reporting be all that is published next morning—a news story, telling, as the reporter might about a formal dinner, what the entertainment was, who gave it, who took part in it, and something of the plot perhaps, how many people were there, how they seemed to like it, and so on.

Then suppose the critic be given a Sunday page or two, wherein to say his critical say of each of the plays of the week, appended to the news story.

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H. F. D., New York, December 5.

**GERMAN IN SCHOOLS.**  
Falling On of the Night Class at De Witt Clinton.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The study of the German language here in America has fallen into a sad state, and being pursued by a smaller number of students as time goes on. Every day we read where some school or institution of learning, on one pretext or another, is expunging it from the curriculum, and the latest development is where it will be taken out of the De Witt Clinton evening school, as the Board of Education does not consider the attendance at the German classes large enough to warrant the maintenance of such classes or the hiring of a teacher thereof.

Many large roads earn an abnormal profit and many small roads lose money. The losses of the small roads could be met from the profits on the large roads without apparent loss to them, as the proportion is as cents to thousands of dollars.

Every one knows that per cent. in overhead expense of any business decreases as the volume increases, and if all railroads were financed from one general fund the saving would be so large that it would be many times pay for whatever loss could possibly be incurred from branches that covered isolated and thinly settled sections of the country.

## THE QUALITY AND THE QUANTITY OF FOOD AT MILITARY CAMPS.

Very Little Disease Due to Lack of One Kind of Food or to Preponderance of Another Kind.

It would be a profound mistake to pay any attention to pessimistic impressions regarding the food at military camps. Apart from the anxiety inspired by disloyal anticipations, the nation is deeply concerned with the problem of supplying the men, not only with good food, but with certain reasonable comforts.

People who are in a position to know about rations are fully mistaken that the food is generally well cooked and sufficient. They are right in saying that the simple food and regular outdoor life have improved the health of officers and men. At the same time, it may be said that even if the food were not so good as it really is, the effect of fresh air, exercise and early hours would be decidedly healthful.

A certain conclusion as to the quality of the rations cannot be drawn in this way. Only food that is really bad and inefficient could produce effects upon the nutrition of the men that would be obvious to the correspondent or occasional visitor to the camps.

The mortality rates do not necessarily indicate what the quality of food is. But the sick lists would show, especially if they were made of diseases, whether it was defective in quality and variety or both. Figures have not yet been published, but it has been made obvious by the experience of the past six months that there is very little disease due to the absence of one kind of food or to the preponderance of another.

In addition, it is just to say that the supervision of the soldiers' meals is most commendable. At Camp Devens, for instance, officers have shown great competence in taking charge of the bill of fare, and it is the rule to have an officer or sergeant in the messroom while the men are eating. The result is that they are well fed and well served. Yet Camp Devens is not better fed than other camps.

In the matter of food it is hardly safe to believe all that is said. A certain number of men will always grumble. But for serious reasons, it is prudent to put in a word of warning against the glib optimism of the following statement which recently appeared in a New York paper: "These men are being better fed, better housed, better looked after physically than any other troops in the world."

This whole remark is utterly illogical. Many of these recruits have, unfortunately, been too poor to pay for good food and lodgings. They are now better off in these respects, but only by the aid of the Government. The present improvement does not, therefore, state much. It is somewhat unconvincing to say that soldiers are better fed, better housed, etc., than when they were at home. In the trenches, or in camps in winter, they are probably

**"HE DID HIS DAMEDEST."**  
Is Carlyle Getting Credit That Belongs to Harle?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Your Lank correspondent, referring to the tank motto at the battle of Cambrai, "The tank corps this day expects every tank to do its damndest," says that the English literary expert attributes the origin of this use of "damndest" to Carlyle.

The idea may have come from Bret Harle, a man held in high esteem by British soldiers. According to Harle, a famous gambler died in California in the days of '49, and his camp acquaintances thought he should have a monument. A collection was taken up, and a committee of one was sent with the money to the nearest place where a tombstone could be obtained. Arriving there, he was surprised to learn that it was the proper thing to make some recognition of the deceased. To the best of the committee's limited knowledge of the departed he hadn't any virtues, but since something had to be inscribed he gave this inscription: "Poker Jack Harle died, July 18, 1849. He did his damndest; no man could do more."

FRANK A. EGAN, New Rochelle, December 5.

**GERMAN IN SCHOOLS.**  
Falling On of the Night Class at De Witt Clinton.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The study of the German language here in America has fallen into a sad state, and being pursued by a smaller number of students as time goes on. Every day we read where some school or institution of learning, on one pretext or another, is expunging it from the curriculum, and the latest development is where it will be taken out of the De Witt Clinton evening school, as the Board of Education does not consider the attendance at the German classes large enough to warrant the maintenance of such classes or the hiring of a teacher thereof.

Many large roads earn an abnormal profit and many small roads lose money. The losses of the small roads could be met from the profits on the large roads without apparent loss to them, as the proportion is as cents to thousands of dollars.

Every one knows that per cent. in overhead expense of any business decreases as the volume increases, and if all railroads were financed from one general fund the saving would be so large that it